

**Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority
Application for Financial Support**

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Applicant: Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

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Applicant's legal status: IC 36-7-7.6

Project Description

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission is requesting a grant of \$100,000 to use as the required local match for a \$400,000 grant from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. The purpose of the grant is to fund data collection for the Household Travel Survey, which is required by the federal transportation and environmental regulations. The survey will be used to update the regional transportation network model for transportation and air quality analysis, including trip generation rates, trip length frequency distributions, and to identify and quantify trip chaining behavior and trips by modes other than car or bus.

The regional transportation network model requires the data from the proposed survey to maintain its accuracy and relevance and to comply with the federal mandate that the model be updated on a regular cycle. The last household travel survey in northwestern Indiana was completed in 1995. The Household Travel Survey is relatively expensive, so it is not done but every 10 years or so. To obtain a statistically valid sample will require more than the federal share that NIRPC has available to it, given all the other planning requirements that this MPO needs to accomplish. Therefore, NIRPC is seeking additional funds through a discretionary pool of federal planning funds contributed by other MPOs in Indiana to reach the full federal share of \$400,000 that is needed.

The survey process is underway for the Chicago area, under the leadership of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). The proposed project would increase the sampling to include northwestern Indiana with a statistically valid sample size. This arrangement takes advantage of the work going on in northeastern Illinois, including the costs for the design of the survey instrument and methods. It also will help to achieve a consistent set of parameters that are valid for northwestern Indiana as well as northeastern Illinois.

The survey is to be conducted by Nu Stats, of Austin Texas. This consultant was selected by the CMAP based on the cost per survey and services. This arrangement will provide significant cost saving, by using the common survey instrument and coordinated data collection covering northeastern Illinois and northwestern Indiana in a single project.

Economic Impact Statement

The economic benefits for the Household Travel Survey are related to the continued development of the transportation infrastructure of northwestern Indiana. The survey work is necessary to comply with federal regulations to continue the implementation of capacity-expansion projects in the regional transportation plan and transportation improvement program. The lack of such a survey on a timely and regular basis jeopardizes the ability of the region to continue transportation system development, and jeopardizes the potential for associated economic development opportunities.

The updates that the survey will provide also support the analytical capability of the regional transportation planning process to respond to issues of traffic congestion. The accuracy of the transportation model is essential in identifying future congestion problem areas and evaluating the suitability of various strategies to respond to the traffic congestion. The effort to reduce traffic congestion will directly benefit the economy of northwestern Indiana by reducing the user costs associated with traffic congestion and delay.

Quality of Life Statement

The ability to continue the development of the regional transportation system, including necessary capacity-expansion projects will be maintained through the implementation of this project. In turn, the development of the transportation system will minimize future traffic congestion problems, which will reduce delays caused by congestion. The users of the transportation system will benefit from the continued transportation system by reducing the amount of time stuck in traffic congestion.

The ability to continue the development of transportation improvements will also result in improved air quality for the residents and visitors in northwestern Indiana.

Funding Request and Financial Analysis

Total project cost:	\$500,000
RDA funds requested:	\$100,000
Total from other sources:	
Federal:	\$400,000 (FHWA-PL / FTA-5303)
State:	
Local:	\$100,000 (RDA)
Private:	

Supporting Materials

A. Attached are:

- 1 "Designing the Inventory" white paper
- 2 Draft contract

B. On the Internet:

1. NuStats: <http://www.nustats.com/>
2. CMAP: <http://www.chicagoareaplanning.org/default.asp>

C. Statement of the Relationship to Other Existing or Proposed Economic Development Projects

The Household Travel Survey provides the foundation for the analytical work with the regional transportation network model in support of the regional transportation plan and congestion management system. These activities lead to the development of regionally significant transportation system expansion projects, which provide the necessary infrastructure for a multitude of regional development projects.

D. Ethics Guidelines

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission has adopted a statement of the Vision and Strategic Directions for 2005-2008. This includes a set of guiding principles and strategies that include ethics and integrity. NIRPC adopted its Employee Handbook on Sept. 23, 1999. It contains a Values and Ethics section that includes a Statement of Core Values, a Professional Standards Policy, and Ethics Guidelines.